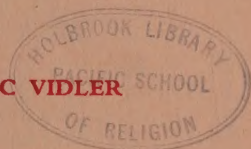


THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER



APRIL 1950

Vol. I No. 4

THE
CHRISTIAN LAITY

•
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AND COMMUNISM

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THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE
COMMON LIFE

Vol. I. No. 4.

APRIL 1950

Notes of the Month

IT was our intention, until shortly before writing these Notes, to avoid discussion of the American decision to go forward with the production of hydrogen bombs. Our reason was of a kind anyone will understand who has had the experience of learning to ride a bicycle: he will remember that when one first had to turn a corner, one was seized with a panicky fear that one was going to collide with the curb or a lamp-post, and the odd thing was that the fixing of one's apprehensive eyes on the obstacle compelled one certainly to collide with it or else to overturn the machine. Safety comes only when you have learnt to keep your eyes where you want to go, not where you fear to fall. The discovery of exterminative weapons of an unlimited frightfulness, just when our world is divided into two mutually hostile and fearful camps, places mankind in a somewhat similar position. If both sides go shouting that the other will certainly use the terrible thing; if all the peace societies, churches and bodies of organized goodwill insist upon warning us against it, if the realistic writers argue that the deadlock is irresolvable and a crash therefore inevitable, whilst the prophets try to exploit the imminence of doom to strengthen their appeals for mass-repentance—the total effect of all this will be to fill the public imagination with expectation of the catastrophe we want to prevent. We

ought to have learnt by now that it is our imaginations, not our wishes or intentions that have decisive power to determine what we do.

However deplorable from this point of view, an outburst of feeling about the hydrogen bomb could not be wholly repressed even during the recent election, and as soon as it was over a number of publicists, institutions and officials responded to the general emotion by issuing statements intended either to inform the public more precisely about the danger or to recommend means of dealing with it. Statements issued by the World Council of Churches, by each of our two Archbishops, the bishops of Chichester, Derby and other pronouncements have been widely circulated and reprinted, and it is unnecessary here to summarize or offer any further comment upon the aspects of the predicament that they have capably presented. In their general effect these statements do not altogether avoid the danger indicated above. At the same time, since the new horror has been presented in terms which seem to make the discussion of any other topic almost frivolous, it would have been difficult for responsible leaders of opinion simply to keep silent. And there are still some aspects of the situation, less publicized, which it may be profitable to consider.

Grounds for Hope

It is a mistake to assume and insist that a hydrogen war is inevitable unless the Russian and American governments come to amicable terms on the problem of controlling atomics, or unless a united world government is instituted. To lay down conditions of salvation when no one at all well-informed can believe they will be fulfilled is not helpful. This is to ask for the removal, rather than the solution, of the problem; it may only divert attention from what we really have to do. More perilously, it can stir up the will to force the imagined solution. The destructive powers at man's disposal necessarily grow more formidable with his progress in technical science, and more terrible means to

wage war are bound to become possible so long as material power is pursued as a good in itself. This attitude to power is not the only one possible: there are also other views of life, in which the command of matter is of secondary importance: but humanity is intoxicated with technical success and for some time at least will have to bear the strains it brings. The most sensational burden—of possessing instruments of “genocide”—may not really be the most onerous. Considered as engines of war, they are of no military value if both combatant parties have them. In the last war with Germany both sides amassed vast stock-piles of poison gas which were never used because either side would have lost more than it gained by entering upon such a hellish competition. Nor would the atomic bomb have been used against Japan if the act would have placed New York in danger of the same visitation. The greatest crime and folly of Hiroshima was the precedent it created: yet in spite of it, the mutually suicidal character of atomic war, especially if the reality of the hydrogen weapon comes up to the grisly expectations, makes it more than conceivable that neither party, even if war comes, will begin to use means that could only make the prospect of victory meaningless. This may seem a precarious hope: but as yet there are grounds for no other, and the hydrogen bomb has made this hope more probable, not less. In such a situation it is a spiritual duty not to think or say that the existence of hydrogen bombs makes it certain they will be used. Man is always surrounded with means to do ill deeds which he need not use, unless he allows ideas of using them to possess his imagination.

Power for Peaceful Purposes

There have indeed been efforts to look on the brighter side of atomic fission. Much has been said about the use of its products in medical research, and a good deal more about the enormously greater supplies of electric power that might be obtained from atomic fuel, perhaps more cheaply

than ever before. The difficulties of harnessing such a cosmic force to human purposes are immense in the case of the uranium products, and in the case of hydrogen there is as yet no suggestion that it will be possible; but many scientists are confident that power stations fired by the fission of heavy elements will be in operation within a decade or two. It would be a dangerous illusion however to suppose that the fear which atomic technique has let loose on the world can be exorcised from the standpoint of the technique itself. For one thing, a fresh source of power that can easily be distributed is not what mankind is chiefly in need of: in this epoch, when the world's population is growing at a prodigious rate, the first material necessity for peaceful development is, as Lord Boyd Orr continually reminds us, the reclamation of waste lands and the enlargement of food supplies. A new fuel of limitless efficiency, easily transportable into any part of the world, would be used, as things now are, to increase the speed of industrialization, breaking down the social structures and the traditional husbandries in many countries and producing social and economic conditions that lead to war. The effort to divert the new power to peaceful ends offers no way out of the menace, if by peaceful ends we mean the pursuit of the same values as before. We should only be leading the world in the same fateful direction at a quicker pace. But could we perhaps use the new energy to give us a start-off along another and really hopeful road?

Can these Bombs be made Bread?

We must be wary of suggestions that the new energy can be diverted to the humane ends that Lord Boyd Orr has in mind. Vague claims have been put out from Russia, that the Soviets are using, or about to use, atomic explosions to alter whole landscapes in order to make them more fertile, which should be accepted with great reserve, quite apart from their political aspect. In the West also any recommendations of atomic progress from the point of view of

world food production are likely to proceed from mixed motives and should be critically scrutinized. Too many people, including many in influential positions, like to think of all practical problems as if they could be resolved by production engineers with more power at their disposal. But the things that are the most deeply and constantly necessary to our existence are such that even a phenomenal access of motive power could play only a minor part in enabling us to produce them better or more abundantly. If it is nutrition for the world's millions that we want, the tasks before us are of another kind—the care of the earth's green cover, for example, the devotion of much more time and thought to the culture of plant and animal life. It is true that in these tasks also men are glad to avail themselves of power when, for instance, their performance makes it desirable to move quantities of matter from place to place ; it would however be fatal to success if we set to work with a new instrument of power in our hands and the determination to find a job for it.

The Cultural Point of View

If the relief of need and necessity is our aim, we must start from quite a different point of view : this is not a power-problem, but a cultural one. Wherever desert is being reclaimed—as it is, for instance, by the French in Africa—we see men studying and applying means which enable the woods and fields to encroach gradually upon the desert : it is a case of extending and developing a given tract of life. Vegetation has to be coaxed and encouraged to pioneer into the harder conditions ; first, by improving the conditions and then by planting and sowing species which do not conflict, but help one another to live ; by promoting what are called “ plant societies ”. The means of power already available, such as motor traction, may be used to lighten the labour, but the work could actually proceed with less power than it does. The distinctive faculties man brings to such work are unlike those employed

in the analysis of matter or the contrivance of power instruments. Fundamentally the business is to understand other living beings, their needs and relations and to co-operate with them; and this implies a respect for the living creature and a will to develop it—in the service of human life but also according to its own nature. This is work which is in some ways more closely analogous to religion than to technology; it almost resembles the pastoral function of cultivating family and communal life; and it can certainly be said that the business of creative husbandry has an affinity with the high art of political statesmanship in the attitude, the kind of insight into the needs of life which it requires. In all these things the use of power and force is necessary, but subsidiary and instrumental: a sudden increase in the amount of power available can easily lead to more harm than good: it may tempt men to take a short cut to success, imperilling the balance of vital forces which they need to cultivate. If man's only way to peace is through a wise care for his earthly home, the reclamation of its wildernesses, he must concentrate his mind upon these cultural arts, refusing to be preoccupied with atomic energy and trying to dismiss the fear of it from his mind.

Fear

The danger is in the fear. Fear is an emotion which, when it seizes men in the mass, can arouse the forces we call "demonic"; as we have seen too often in the last two decades. Even Hitler could hardly have aroused these forces as he did but for the fear of Communism, the danger of which was so much better known in Germany and Eastern Europe than elsewhere. Freedom from fear was one of the four freedoms that President Roosevelt promised on behalf of the Allies, at the very time when the manufacture of the atomic bomb had been begun; and it was begun because of fear—needless, as it turned out—that the Germans could produce the same weapon before their defeat. In the complex international situation that has pre-

ailed ever since the bomb was used, nothing is so obvious as that it is a deadlock of mutual fears, and the measures taken from the motive of fear have led, in practically every case, to a more fearful situation. The decision to produce the latest horror proceeds from fear that the Soviets would produce it even if America refrained from doing so; and indeed America's renunciation of it would not deter the Russians, for they would still go in fear of what we must now call "ordinary" atomic war. Nor can we say of any of these fears that it is groundless; on the contrary, the alarmed party has only to give its imagination up to the danger to feel that it is possibly—probably—nay, certainly so great that the most vitally important and urgent thing in the world is to devise protection against it. Unfortunately protection can hardly take any other form, in the circumstances, than the making of one's own position more formidable, and thereby arousing still more fear on the other side.

Counsels of Prudence

With the appearance of the hydrogen bomb, however, mutual terrorization reaches a limit; neither half of our divided world could now invent anything that would appear more terrible to the other. We can be no nearer the brink of the precipice, the only step further is over it; and that step could be taken only if one side were led by criminal fools who tried to annihilate the other side too swiftly for retaliation to be possible. Recent historical events have unfortunately made us feel that such an attempt is far from inconceivable, but we may hope it is very unlikely. All that ordinary people can do towards averting it is to lessen the tension of fear in themselves and as far as possible in others. It is in this light that we have read the appeals issued by the leaders of the churches. Those of the Archbishops, if interpreted as practical advice to the statesmen, amount to this—that a great effort should be made by the heads of the states most concerned to reach agreement upon the control of

atomic production ; and that if Russia still raises insuperable objections the other nations should form a league and covenant hereafter to refrain from the use of such a weapon except against any power which might do so, in which case they would all use every means against it. The first part of this advice—which was also offered by Mr. Churchill—seems to have fallen flat. The American State Department, for reasons they have made public, thought that such an approach would do more harm than good. The second part represents the policy which the signatories of the Atlantic Pact might well adopt. The only abstinence it requires is one that they are bound to observe not only in morality but in prudence, for who wants to begin such a bombardment ? The league proposed is also a counsel of prudence, if that virtue is mentionable in such a connection : for nations do not initiate wars which they see that they will lose, and for a long while to come the Western powers will be able to offer just that discouragement to any aggressor, provided they do not fall out among themselves. These things the Archbishops urge in their capacity as citizens, but the effect is only to confirm that no political solution is in sight. Statesmen will do what they can ; but the defensive measures they take will increase the potential danger, in the hope that this may gain time, and that the deadlock will be resolved upon some other plane of action, or by some development in the circumstances, providential and unforeseeable.

The End of Fear

The truth is, then, that we cannot be relieved of this fear : we have to learn to live with it. It is the fear of fear that we have to overcome. As Dr. Garbett said in the last paragraph of his statement, "The first Christians lived under the sense of impending crisis." The Christian Church was born in the expectation that the end of the world was at hand, and in its keenest moments of revivification it has lived under the same shadow of imminent world doom. Far from depressing the spirit of Christian men or dulling

their zest for life and work this apprehension quickened their consciousness, kindling each instant of life in time into a spark of eternity. We have come to another of these apocalyptic periods ; and the bomb is the symbol of our predicament. It is as though all the evil within himself that man's pride has refused to face were revealed in this his most spectacular invention. How can he not be afraid, thus confronting the reality of his own spirit, and at the same time his total inability, by any contrivance of his own, to escape from the net he has woven around himself?¹ Such is the judgment of God, and such is our dependence upon God's mercy.

That is the right fear, of which we should not be afraid ; we should rather pray that it may enter into us, shake us and do all its will with us ; for this is fear that locates danger where it is. The evil is not in the bomb, not even in the circumstances that make its existence terrible, and for most of us the thing is unprofitable even to contemplate, except on occasion as a symbol. Anything else is all too likely to arouse the wrong fear, leading to action that increases the risk of mortal error. As to what can be done about it, that is best left to those who are professionally concerned, for their interests in the matter are on the average the same as ours, and their knowledge of what is possible more precise. The whole power-structure of civilization is altered by man's discovery of the electrical constitution of matter : and for all we know it may have made his position as a creature untenable. But that is only to say that we really know nothing, not even the cleverest of us, about what will happen to us ; what we do know is that we are still, as we always were, in God's hands. And that His will for us is that we should fill our mind and imagination with whatever things are true, of value, of virtue or worthy of any praise. The hydrogen bomb is not one of these.

¹ " God teaches us by events ; He lets us go as long as we like in our own way, till our own way becomes an absurdity and a contradiction ; till it refutes itself and we have to extricate ourselves out of it as we can."—J. B. Mozley's *University Sermons* (p. 2).

INTERIM

Jerusalem

The preparation of a Statute for making Jerusalem an international city had to be stopped in 1947. Since last December it has been resumed, upon an instruction of the General Assembly of the U.N. to its Trusteeship Council. It is noteworthy that both the "Garreanu Plan" now being considered and the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent "Lambeth Plan" differ from earlier proposals. The boundaries they suggest would make more modest demands on the present *de facto* rulers of Jerusalem—Israel and Jordan. Bethlehem is no longer likely to be included; and in the Garreanu Plan the Haram al Sharif (the old Temple area of the Bible) remains in Jordanian and thus in Moslem hands. The inclusion of Mount Scopus, at present in Arab territory, makes the Garreanu plan more acceptable to Israelis, for this site holds the Hebrew University and the Hadassah Hospital, and the Jews' chances of access to these will otherwise be remote; it also places an appropriate emphasis upon the world-wide, not merely local significance of these great Jewish institutions. There should be possibility of agreement along these lines.

* * * * * *

On the merits of these two plans, Britain does not speak with one voice in the councils of the nations. Opinion is divided between the Government on one hand and the Archbishops, other Christian leaders and Christian societies on the other. There are also differences within denominations. As a demonstration of freedom of opinion this will doubtless make its own impression in the international arena, and need occasion no shame or indignation on the British side. However, the right to differ decays unless accompanied by the will to agree. It is a task for the churches to see that this controversy over the Holy Land does not degenerate, either in this country or in the United Nations, into a wrangle over constitutions, but faces the spiritual issues—and opportunities—which are before us.

The "viability" of the proposed international city is really of less importance even to its most zealous champions than what it symbolizes—the peace and unity of mankind. It is therefore vital, and has now become urgent, that all the Christian churches and institutions which are to be active in the Holy Land should examine, re-state, and

if necessary, re-formulate the ends they seek there, whether of worship, sacred study or social service. The survival of a symbol will itself be valueless if it does not symbolize a living purpose.

Sercinev

How far can the cinema-screen be used for teaching Christian truth to the general public? The French have done more than others towards answering this question. A report of the Paris Congress of last November on the Use of Films in Evangelism has lately been circulated in English by the World Council of Churches; and the most impressive evidence in it is furnished by the convening body, the French Service CINématographique d'EVangelisation, known as Sercinev. This evidence shows how hard it is to adjust our minds to the state of the world in which religious truth is to be communicated.

* * * * *

The method most successfully employed by Sercinev is "to show all types of films (including comic ones) borrowed from commercial programmes, which are not classed as religious but are able to illustrate—in such a way, for instance, as parables—the meaning of the Gospel". Everything depends on the speaker in charge of the performance. He must be able to instruct the public by the manner in which he introduces the film before its projection, and then, after it has been shown, he must be able to pass easily from discussing the technical side of it to the human and the moral. In other words he must acquire the art of using the emotional and mental effect of a situation realized upon the screen, to draw attention to a spiritual experience and awaken the audience to the aspect of life in which God becomes real. "It is the 'maieutic' method, beloved of Socrates and practised by Jesus Himself." Here an essential point is that the films employed must touch upon some important area of practical decision in common human experience. Where this is so, even films of an anti-religious bias may be good starting-points for discussing the relevance of the Gospel. At all events, the major need is not for films with a Christian doctrinal content, but for secular films *which are religious*. Any films which indicate the reality of thanksgiving, penitence, trust, responsibility and ideas of that order, are putting back into our common culture the vitamins upon which Christian faith can be nurtured. The Sercinev method is a sound, but not easy one. It has achieved some striking successes; though, as the Report honestly avows:—

"The first problem to be solved is how to persuade the public

to remain in their seats. At Pontoise it was only after the sixth session that a few members consented to stay and discuss the film."

Everyone who has used films as a means of arousing religious discussion will find in Sercinev a rewarding study.

This Conference, at which seven other countries were represented, made decisions likely to lead to an extensive pooling of resources between European Churches for the promotion of religious instruction by the cinema.

The Roman Catholic organization in this field (Office Catholique Internationale du Cinéma) was founded in 1929, has already had four international congresses, and its distinguished services are very well known.

Vatican Rulings

Both Dr. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and the Archbishop of Canterbury have publicly commented on the "instructions" that were recently issued by the Vatican concerning "doctrinal conversations between Catholics and Protestants". Both welcome the new rulings as a sign that the Roman Catholic Church is taking a closer interest in the ecumenical movement. Informal meetings for discussion between Roman Catholics and representatives of other confessions have been taking place for some time in several countries. The Vatican has now taken official cognizance of this fact. Dr. 't Hooft however points out that, as henceforth such meetings may be held only "with the approval of the competent ecclesiastical authority", their spontaneous character, on which much of their value has depended, will be lost, and there will be less scope for pioneers in this field. The Archbishop also considers that by imposing a strict control on Roman Catholic participation in ecumenical discussions the Vatican has discouraged rather than encouraged those who have already been taking part in them. On the other hand, interconfessional meetings, for the discussion not of faith and morals but concerning joint action in regard to social questions, are apparently to be facilitated by the new Vatican rulings, and the Archbishop expresses the hope that the co-operation, which began some years ago between the British Council of Churches and the Sword of the Spirit, but which subsequently hung fire, may now be revived.

Both Dr. 't Hooft and the Archbishop regard the Vatican's removal

of its ban on all common prayer at gatherings that are held under these auspices as a definite step forward.

Political Discontents

Far too much dissatisfaction with the results of the General Election has been expressed during the last month. Many have assumed, as though it were a matter of course, that another election would have to be held at an early date. This is quite likely to happen, but, if it does, another narrow majority is no less probable. One of the conditions for the successful working of our party system is that the King's government should be able to frame policies with the support of the House of Commons even if the members are almost evenly divided in party loyalty. Such a government may have to moderate the more controversial of its aims, and the opposition have to exercise more forbearance than usual: but if the electorate is split about fifty-fifty on the general national attitude to progress or consolidation—a condition which might recur, or might last a considerable time—the government is no less responsible for finding out how to govern. It must do so according to its interpretation of the national needs; and the members are all responsible up to a point, for helping it.

.

This dissatisfaction with the election has also aroused suggestions for altering the electoral system, most of which we have heard before. No one supposes our present procedure is ideal or sacrosanct. Increasing party discipline, the decline of independent members and groups, radio electioneering and the now universal franchise may divide the nation too much into the merely temperamental opposition, and, if so, narrow majorities might easily become the rule. No system will ever be perfect, and ours, pretty good as democratic systems go, has its weaknesses. But it is a fallacy to think we should get better results by making it slightly more "representative". Each citizen has the twenty millionth part of a national decision once in five years; and all of these added together constitute no more than a statistical check on what the professional politicians do. Those who want really to exercise some political influence are at liberty to join their local political parties, where they have a hand in the choice of candidates, and can help also in developing the thought and programmes of the main parties. The price of liberty is more than marking a ballot-paper; more even than "eternal vigilance". It means personal expense of time and trouble.

THE CHRISTIAN LAITY¹

WE have in Great Britain such a multiplicity of Churches and confessional traditions, that a great deal of time could be spent on trying to understand from their varying theological traditions the different status of the laity in each of them.

In actual fact these differences are not as great as many would suppose, the main reason being, of course, that all churches lay stronger emphasis on certain theological pre-suppositions in speech than they do in action. Anyone who attends a Congregational, or indeed any Free Church will hear sermons on the priesthood of all believers. From this, many Anglicans have been misled into believing that the lay administration of the Sacraments is a commonplace of Free Church practice, which it is not, and express the opinion that a Free Church minister is ruled by his people. On the other hand, it is generally supposed that the Church of England, with its hierarchical organization and its views on the nature of ordination, makes the layman a theological cypher in the church. Even most Anglicans would be astonished to hear that in the 1662 prayer book the laity have a share in the choice of the ministry. The ordination service opens with the archdeacon presenting candidates to the bishop for ordination *on behalf of the people*, who are then invited to express any objections they may have. In the last five years this function of the laity has been given articulate expression. All bishops have agreed that every ordination candidate must attend a three-day *selection course*, where his vocation is tested by a group of selectors among whom laymen are to be found. But very few laymen in the Church of England know anything about this! The point of my illustrations is this—that there may be differences between the churches in the theological bases of the status of the

¹ From a paper read to a meeting of leaders of laymen's institutes and movements at Bossey, April, 1949.

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METHUEN

laity, but not much comes from arguing about them because in *no* church do the laity occupy the status to which theologically they are entitled, and in no church is anything more than a small handful conscious of having a theological status. So the problem in all churches is much the same—rousing the laity to a sense of their theological significance and interpreting it in terms of practical duty.

There is at present in Great Britain a great deal of talk in church circles about the importance of the laity. Little of it is theological, in that little of it is concerned fundamentally with the question of the *wholeness* of the Church of Christ. Some of it is irresponsible, calling on the laity to evangelize, to bear witness to the Gospel in their work, to take their church responsibilities seriously, etc., etc., without much thought about how. The real root of this awakening sense of the importance of the laity arises from the knowledge that there are too few ministers, that they have too many duties and that if things go on as at present our churches as institutions have a poor expectation of life in the modern world.

Victorian Shadows

It is difficult to realize the extent to which in Great Britain our thinking about the church is dominated by our picture of the past. All older Christians remember the full and busy churches of the pre-1914 era; and everybody has a mental picture of the great nineteenth century of religious activity, when the churches were full and when they were a power in the national life. Thousands of church people to-day think of that type of church life as the norm, as church life as it ought to be and as they wish it were.

A marked characteristic of the churches of the nineteenth century was that they were not interested in the *status* of the laity but were interested in their *function*. The church in every age has to live its life between two poles; it has to seek theological truth and try to make its life conform to that truth—but its life is lived in society, not somewhere up

in the air, and, being in society, it is subject to the laws of sociology, which can no more be dodged or changed by Christians than the law of gravity. The Victorians had an astonishing intuitive grasp of this fact. They did respond to the needs of their day, they did make patterns of church life appropriate to their times. Their successors, it seems to me, are the Americans, whose churches in their outward organization and activity do conform to sociological reality more than those in Europe. They have responded in a magnificent way to the human need for community; they have been culture builders in new areas, and therefore they are fuller than our churches.

Let me explain more carefully what I mean when I say that the Victorian churchman was far more interested in the function than in the status of the laity.

For the last half of the century thousands of churches and congregations in Great Britain were occupied by the problem of a rapidly expanding urban population, and laymen were vigorously engaged in raising what to us now seem fabulous sums for church extension in new areas, to which they themselves emigrated as the nuclei of new congregations. I am not speaking of the time after 1920 when we had our second great wave of emigration from the towns, this time into new housing estates built, for the most part, for working-class people. I am speaking of the nineteenth century emigration, when the middle classes moved out from the towns to new suburbs, leaving the working classes to spread into the old-fashioned houses which they had vacated. This nineteenth-century expansion set the middle class church-goer a tremendous task. It was a remarkable feat that the parochial system was extended to so many new areas, and that the Free Churches also should have repeated in these new places the pattern of their former distribution over the face of the land.

Even then there was margin for more tasks. The work of foreign missions was built up and supported. Innumerable philanthropic, social and reforming societies, some specifically Christian, some humanitarian but with strong Christian

support, found the money and the voluntary service they needed; and in addition to this the internal pattern of the life of a congregation was built up—Sunday Schools, women's organizations, men's meetings, cultural and athletic societies, and so on. Here laymen wielded very large powers. In many a congregation the superintendent of the Sunday School with a thousand scholars, the leader of the Men's Bible Class of a hundred and fifty members, and the woman who had enlisted five hundred women to a regular afternoon meeting, was far too much of a figure in the Church, and far too busy, to give much thought to the theological status of the laity.

It is this busy, flourishing church life led by the middle class laity, that most Christians have in mind when they think of the heyday of church activity before 1914. There were of course other types, but they have not left the same mark on memory or on the shape of our denominational organizations. There was the country parish, in which squire and parson together seemed to be the personal embodiment of the more abstract alliance of church and state. The country church rarely had any of the premises which a city church was beginning to consider indispensable, and the layman's business was to worship and listen in the church and act in the village. There was the country nonconformist chapel, the very fortress of lay initiative and power, where the minister came perhaps once a month and all other services were conducted by laymen. There was the working-class congregation of the North and Wales, where a true working-class culture grew up and the life of the working community found expression in the vigorous life of the chapel, where again lay leadership was conspicuous.

All these types showed the response of the religious mind to different sociological conditions. Religion found, as it were, the right channels through which to flow out over and irrigate the broad and differing fields of the common life, ministry and laity co-operating in the task. But with one great exception. No way was found to bring the church

into this sort of fructifying relationship with the great new population bulge of the nineteenth century, the city proletariat, the people who have never left the Church for the reason that they had never been in it.

All these types of church life (and no doubt there are more than can here be noted) have suffered in the general decline of church-going in the last thirty years. None has been wholly resistant to the general tide. But the things which carried men into the types of churches here sketched were not all religious, and the factors which carried them out were not all religious and therefore it is perhaps reasonable to suppose that a "return" to the churches will not be brought about by religious teaching alone. Mr. Middleton Murry explained the decline of the village church in largely sociological terms—the decline of the wealth of the middle classes and the gradual removal of the resident parson from the village. The chapels of Wales were the homes of national language and culture when there was no other means by which a Welshman could preserve his national life, the natural vehicle of his religion. The chapels of the North gave working men a place of their own, and the life of these chapels dwindled very often not because men gave up believing in God, but in the first instance because their fellowship was broken by the ones and twos of their numbers who made "the brass" and lorded it over their fellows.

This is not in the least to deny that there has been at the same time a real decline in religious belief and in the willingness to bear any sort of a religious profession, throughout our society. Yet there is a marked difference between the attitude of the non-churchgoer to religion and his attitude to the churches. More people listen Sunday by Sunday to religious broadcasts than attend the churches, and the majority of these listeners are non-churchgoers and (even more striking) working class. Much evidence seems to point to the conclusion that the church, the local institution, is not sufficiently of a piece with local life for men to be able to walk into it without feeling the jerk of plunging into an

alien environment. This has got little to do with moral goodness or with theological knowledge or with unfamiliar liturgy. "Not my sort," said Cosmo Gordon Lang, casting his eye round the company of Cuddesdon students whom he was about to join. That about sums it up—class, outlook, general approach to life, difficult to define and therefore difficult to change.

The middle-class town church becomes the pattern

But it is necessary to go back to the first type of church described in this paper, the one in which the middle-class laity played so very large a part, because perhaps the beginning of an answer to this question of ecclesiastical sociology is to be found here. These churches were much more than local phenomena. Their outlook was the nation-wide outlook of the middle-classes. They canalized all the passion of the middle-classes for voluntary service, they were meeting-minded, cause-minded, pamphlet-minded. While they were in their heyday the central bodies of the denominations, as we know them to-day, were set up. (Is it possible to believe, that if England had remained a country of village parishes and cathedrals we should ever have had a Church Assembly or a Church House, Westminster?)

Thus the particular virtues and limitations of the middle-class town church were carried to the centre and erected into organizations which slowly began to bring a new measure of standardization into church life, so that soon it came to be looked on as a *sine qua non* that any church worthy of the title "a live church" should have halls and a kitchen and classrooms, and in them conduct local branches of this, that and the other Christian organization for women or men or youth or to support temperance or missions or a choice of several dozen causes. In fact, of course, a church of this kind can only flourish if there is a large number of laymen in it who heartily believe in these things and have time to give to them. This could be assumed of the typical large town church of the end of the nineteenth century, but it is

too large an assumption to make to-day, and none know this better than those who work in the headquarters of the denominations, as they try to adapt the machine to radically altered conditions in the churches they serve, and watch a score of Christian organizations with London offices and staffs competing for a share of the time of the laymen of the local churches and a place on their programmes. It is a hard saying but surely it is true that a great many of our Christian laymen are not vitally interested in many of the "causes" which have gathered round the church. Some of them conscientiously feel that some of the things which the churches try to do are better left to secular agencies and that Christians ought to be active there. They are bewildered, perhaps even annoyed, by the multiplicity of Christian agencies, many of them overlapping in a wasteful fashion, which solicit their help as soon as they get into the church porch. As for serving on the numerous committees of the denominational headquarters, few laymen have the time to go to meetings held almost always at times which suit the parsons, unless they are retired or have very unusually elastic business commitments. Thus the voice of the schoolmaster, the local government official, the doctor, and many others who ought to be working hand in glove with the churches at the local level can scarcely ever be heard at the centre where in these days so many of the decisions affecting the life of local churches are taken. A further result is that the burden of running the local church's many activities and of attending time-occupying central committees falls willy-nilly on the parson, who then, in the opinion of many laymen, performs less well than he should, the essential ministerial tasks, notably preaching.

Because all the foregoing paragraph is a matter of common observation, in these days there is in all the churches a buzz of talk about the necessity of awakening the laity to a new sense of their responsibilities. The Church Assembly has set up a Church Electorate committee which is, among other things, producing literature for laymen telling them what

the major decisions in church policy have recently been and encouraging them to use their votes in the church and take their turn in serving. In the diocese of London, preceding and following on the recent Mission, there have been week-end courses to help laymen to understand and be able to explain their faith. Other denominations have made similar moves, and the Methodists, realizing that few working men can go away for week-ends, and indeed have not got the week-end habit (for is not the new custom of week-ends for religious purposes yet another example of the church's way of basing its strategy on *middle-class* social habits?) have been running highly successful local conferences on the Christian at his work and in his church. Activity is certainly there about the laity, but perhaps there are one or two considerations arising out of what has been said in these pages which might deserve discussion:—

(i) The success of the "omnicompetent" church of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was partly due to the fact that the middle-classes had money and time. These factors do not always command success, least of all in serving God, and we might do well to cut out all bemoaning of their departure (no easy discipline). But success also came because the laity were free to take initiatives and to throw themselves into the work that they could do best because they knew what they expected of their priest or minister. He had both a religious and a sociological function. Most priests of the Church of England in the nineteenth century were university men and what was then understood by the term "gentlemen". Both by ordination and by social and educational standing they were other than the majority in their congregations. The education of the Scottish ministry was proverbial and the English Free Churches, before the universities were opened to them in 1871, had their own "academies" for the education at least of those who would go to the larger churches. The average busy layman liked to feel that he had done his duty, theologically speaking, by equipping his minister with the highest possible theological

qualifications. If the resultant sermons were a bit above his head, that was a matter for pride rather than regret. Anyway the man in the pew was a good judge of an inaccurate Biblical quotation, and the reading of the Book in the home and the study of it in the Bible class made a theological bridge between clergy and people. They might have their differences, but ministry and people knew what they expected of each other. The minister's job was a specialized function, for which he was given a specialized education. But now the picture has changed. Roughly speaking, the Churches go on giving to the Ministry a *specialized* education, not very different in the different denominations and producing a recognizable clerical type, and expect as the result a *generalized* function. The parson must be able to preach briefly and trenchantly, pray audibly, visit graciously, preside wittily, administer with efficiency, and be a good fellow to everybody inside and outside the Church. He is expected to be all the functions of the laity. A lot of irritation, misunderstood as anti-clericalism, is felt by Christians and outsiders against an attempted clerical omniscience in the impossible task of running a type of church life which is so largely a hangover from different sociological conditions. It is useless to think that over-clericalism can be cured by plunging to the opposite extreme—over-laicism might be far, far worse. If it is true that the Christian laity are waking up and shaking off the willingness to let the parson do everything, then minister and people have to take stock of each other again, for no congregation of laymen can understand their own theological function in the church, from which their activity springs, until they understand the key: what the parson is for. He is no longer set apart by birth, education and class in the old way, yet men are bound to ask whether the setting apart by ordination to spiritual office carries with it the right and the competence to lead in everything, either in the community outside or in the congregation within. Yet leadership there must be, and the minister is the chosen leader of the church. At a time when

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popular feeling about the nature of leadership has so much changed that in industry it is being recognized that position and expertise will not give a manager the power to lead unless he has broad and imaginative sympathies, the same problems ought to be faced in the church, both in the choice and training of ordinands and in the relationship between pastor and people.

(ii) Similarly there must be more thought given by the laity to the new category of persons in the churches of to-day whose appointment has been made necessary, partly by the fact that laymen have so little time, partly by the fact that the churches have to redeem themselves from an amateurishness in their social and educational work which passed muster well enough when there were no statutory bodies at work in the same field. These are the trained experts in Sunday School work, moral welfare, adult education and especially in youth work. These persons exercise quasi-ministerial functions—certainly they are pastors and teachers. Their presence is essential, yet it might be highly dangerous if the laity thought that the amateur henceforth had nothing to do in these fields. They ought to help the laity to feel a greater confidence in bearing necessary responsibilities in the church, but since most of them work not for one congregation but for an area, they can only be of the greatest use if those whom they advise and help transcend in their conception of church membership the bounds of the individual congregation and feel and see the larger area of diocese or district as their responsibility.

(iii) The omni-competent congregation, with its many organizations which was typical of middle class Victorian England, had a devastating effect on the idea of the worshipping congregation, which tended to become one among a number of other things that churches did, and notably what they did on Sundays as opposed to what they did on weekdays. Many churches to-day are emaciated shadows of their own past, and it is seen perhaps for the first time that the heart of the church is not the peripheral organization

but the worshipping congregation. Thrust back on this many find that it has a very thin content. Only some laymen catch the glimpse of a worshipping congregation as a Heavenly community trying to live on earth in fellowship with each other the blessed life of those who in Heaven always behold the Face of Him they worship.

(iv) There is real danger that a revival of thought about the theological status and function of the laity might have a devastating effect on recruitment to the ministry. There are many young men who feel not only that they might lessen their chances of getting into touch with outsiders and of influencing the life of this country in which they see the forces of secularism gaining ground, by joining a profession which is ill-paid, often ill-thought-of and possessing only a tithe of the influence which it once had in the nation and in the locality. Even those who feel most strongly that the lay forces of the church have been squandered on trivialities when the world is crashing round our ears (and how specially true is this of the wastage of the women power of the churches!) and who are determined to redress the situation, do well to ask what chance there would be of Christianity surviving in anything but residual form if the trained ordained ministry were to fall into decay. The more the need is seen for the laity to be up and doing, the more urgent is it that just those men who know that they would make very good laymen should consider the call to the Christian ministry, for the man who could have held his own in the world in politics, business, the arts and the professions is needed in the ministry.

(v) There remains a task to Christian laymen which they alone can perform. Neither evangelism, nor the typical "frontier" work of the Christian who seeks to make Christian influences felt in that part of the body politic in which he works, can proceed unless once more the churches become sociologically of a piece with their environment. At present the channels are clogged. The Christian does have to compass heaven and earth to make one proselyte even in his

own suburb because it is so difficult to make contact *and to maintain it*. The slow piecemeal job for which there is often too little to show in terms of "results"—the job of showing that the church is vitally and unselfseekingly concerned about everything that affects the welfare of the neighbourhood—is the job of the layman, and it has to be done with a genuine prophetic touch (a quality which laymen hardly ever associate with their activities) "in the name of the Lord".

KATHLEEN BLISS.

KARL BARTH AND COMMUNISM

[The names of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner are often conjoined in the Anglo-Saxon world as the leaders of the Reformed theology which now dominates European Protestantism. It is better known on the Continent that these two theologians differ profoundly from one another, sometimes even fiercely. Their differences have lately extended from the sphere of theological debate into the political arena, and this article explains where each at present stands.—Eds.]

KARL BARTH'S historic stand against the Nazi heresy is well known. He refused to take the oath of personal loyalty required of German professors and was suspended from teaching at Bonn. But for his Swiss citizenship there is little doubt that a worse fate would have befallen him. That he is not now standing out against the Communist menace to human freedom with comparable staunchness and rigidity has startled even some of his closest friends and has led in particular to a lively controversy with his friend Emil Brunner. Brunner says that the Church must address "an uncompromising 'No' to totalitarianism which in any form is irreconcilable with Christianity". Barth, on the other hand, denies that the Communist menace is comparable to that of the Nazis ten years ago. "History does not repeat itself" and the Church must discriminate

and not allow herself to be bullied into abstract and absolute condemnations, "thoughtless slogans" and "exaggerations".

A leading document in this Barth-Brunner controversy was a sermon published¹ by Barth under the title "The Church between East and West". This was published in the *World Review* last July and August and answered in the same journal by Christopher Hollis. But the background of the dispute is the visit to the Reformed Church in Hungary which Barth had made shortly before. His report on that visit provoked Brunner to his "Open Letter to Karl Barth", which has since been published, together with a number of other "Hungarian Documents"² containing Barth's detailed reply to Brunner's accusations. Neither of these booklets has appeared in this country, and as a pamphlet by Brunner on *Communism, Capitalism, and Christianity* has just come out in English,³ it may be useful to attempt a brief summary of the argument that it re-opens.

Barth's message to the Reformed Church in Hungary gives the crux of his position. "Have the courage to use your own minds." "Do not believe that the Church has a ready-made recipe to apply to every political situation." Do not fall in with the totalitarians by becoming equally doctrinaire anti-totalitarians. Strive at all costs to maintain your freedom of judgment. Small-scale action is often more effective than wildly abstract verbal condemnations. Thus "the smallest parish church in a country village may be more important than the whole Amsterdam Conference". Above all, the Christian must try to see the great political upheavals of our time against the background of "the beginning and end of human history which are the Death and Resurrection and

¹ *Die Kirche zwischen Ost und West*, Evangelischer Verlag, Zollikon-Zurich.

² *Christliche Gemeinde im Wechsel der Staatsordnungen: Dokumente einer Ungarnreise*, Evangelischer Verlag, Zollikon-Zurich.

³ *Communism, Capitalism, and Christianity*. By Emil Brunner. Lutterworth Press. 1s. 6d.

the Second Advent of Jesus Christ". Against that eschatological background of the Christian Gospel even the shattering political earthquakes of our day are but passing tremors on the surface of history. Again, the Christian must beware of exaggerating the devilishness of any political order. An "element of God's wisdom and patience" is present even in the worst. In so far as it "creates room for the fulfilment of the meaning of world history" every state is a "gift from God", a "divinely ordained measure to preserve human society from chaos" and the Christian duty should be not "sterile negation" but "prayerful participation" in this work of God.

The Church must offer neither absolute obedience nor absolute opposition to the "powers that be". Her primary task, from which she must not allow herself to be deflected by "thoughtless slogans", is to work for her own vital renewal, in a new understanding of the Bible, a new life of prayer and a new witness. From such inner renewal all other things will follow and a solid position will be attained from which she can view the happenings of the day with "unprejudiced calm". Her allegiance is not to systems and principles but to a living Master, whom she is called to serve in every situation sometimes by speech but sometimes also by the witness of silence.

It is not difficult to see matter for controversy here and Brunner's "Open Letter to Karl Barth" begins by asking how Barth reconciles his present attitude to Communist totalitarianism with his former uncompromising opposition to Nazi totalitarianism. It goes so far as to question whether Barth has ever really faced the problem of totalitarianism as such, and this is probably the central issue, for Barth maintains that "totalitarianism as such" is a "thoughtless slogan", an abstraction from an ever-changing, never static concrete political reality which it is dishonest to condemn in advance and without inside knowledge of the particular situation. It is to ignore the "concrete reality" in favour of a "prejudiced systematization of history". In

any case, Barth argues, if the question is "totalitarianism as such" why concentrate your guns on Communism so exclusively? What about Franco Spain, what about the Dutch "blitzkrieg" on the Indonesians ("which inevitably reminded one of certain proceedings in May 1940")? "This Christian battle-cry against Communism is in fact not quite honest. Therefore we refuse to join in it." Brunner replies that Communism is an even more systematic and ruthless attack on the freedom and rights of the human person than Nazism, which even at its worst was somewhat "diletante"; and the contrast of this view with Barth's can best be shown in Barth's own words:

"One cannot say of Communism as one was forced to say of Nazism that it is merely a product of sheer madness and criminality. It would be senseless to mention in the same breath the philosophy of Marxism and the ideology of the Third Reich, or to mention a man of the stature of Joseph Stalin in the same breath as such charlatans as Hitler, Goering, Hess, Goebbels, Himmler, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, Streicher, and the rest. What has been tackled in Soviet Russia, albeit with very dirty and bloody hands and in a way that rightly shocks us, is after all the solution of a problem which is a serious and burning problem for us as well and which we, with our clean hands, have not yet tackled anything like energetically enough—the social problem. Our Western 'No' to the solution of this problem in Russia could only be a Christian 'No' if we had a better conscience with regard to what we mean by Freedom in the West, if we too were attempting a more humane but no less energetic solution to this problem. As long as one cannot say that of the West—with all due recognition of the good intentions of the British Labour Party—as long as there is still 'freedom' in the West to pour corn into the sea while people are starving, we Christians must refuse to hurl an absolute 'No' at the East."

Even more controversial is another distinction he draws between Nazism and Communism. Communism is not "anti-Christian", but merely "coldly non-Christian", whereas the "basic crime" of the Nazis was their attempt to foist a substitute religion, an Aryanized Germanic Jesus on the German people. Communism which is "brutally but

honestly Godless " makes no such attempt to present itself as " positive Christianity " and it was this attempt which made Nazism a spiritual " temptation " even for many within the Church. At least the Communist attitude is clear-cut. Whether it is possible to dismiss that attitude as merely " coldly non-Christian " since the Mindzsenty and the Bulgarian trials (and Barth was writing *after* both of them) most observers will hesitate to believe. But to Barth this " coldly non-Christian attitude " is in fact not much different from the " wisdom that is allowed to swagger about in the West in every street and every paper and even in some of our Churches ". Such a statement forces us to ask if he is not indeed, as his friend Brunner claims, at any rate partially blind to the " concrete reality " of the Communist onslaught on the Church and Christianity in Eastern Europe (and now becoming more and more acute in Czechoslovakia). The Christian " No " to Communism is in any case directed not so much at the " energetic " solution of the " social problem " inside Russia, as at the tyrannical imposition of this solution on her unwilling satellites.

Brunner agrees that " to contrast the godless East " with the " Christian West " is " a great exaggeration ". In the East too the Church survives and has probably gained in depth what it has lost in numbers through persecution. The Western Church has much to learn from Eastern Orthodoxy, but the Christian " No ! " the " passionate and absolute Christian No ! " is not being said, primarily, even to Communism " as such " but to the totalitarian claims which it makes upon persons and peoples outside its own sphere. But, rejoins Barth, if such opposition to Communism is pushed to the limit " the worst will come to the worst " again. Rather than emphasize and add to the conflict between East and West the Church should help the reconstructive forces which exist on both sides of the Iron Curtain by her own prayer and witness, " keeping herself in and through the Word of God that she may proclaim it to West and East alike with a joyful conscience."

As Brunner says at the end of his Open Letter, everything that Barth says is of "great influence" to-day. Barth refuses to join in the "Christian battle-cry against Communism". The "partisan" attitude which he called upon the Church to take against Nazism he will not assume towards Communism. All that such battle cries can consist of to-day is merely "cheap, idle, and useless talk". "If the worst were to come to the worst again as it did ten years ago then we should see who would then be fighting in the front rank: those who are calling for a definite word from the Church or those who believe that our only political strength now lies in quietness and hope."

STANLEY GODMAN.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

MENTAL HEARING

Dear Sirs,

In the February issue of *The Frontier* a correspondent speaks of "a course of lessons in listening". He says that most of us nowadays fail to attend to what others are saying. "Most of us have noticed, in some conversation or other, that the other fellow has evidently missed the point of our argument because he was already thinking out his own next observation, or even reflecting upon his last."

I have myself belonged to a "school for listening" for now something like thirty-two years. I am still so far from being an adept that I blush for myself, and I must add that those who try this kind of listening continually fail in the same respect.

This however is what we are trying for. We are a very small group of people and yet we think ourselves sometimes too large. I think myself the ideal number is seven or eight and we, when nearly all are present, are more likely to be twenty. In fact there are other groups smaller than ours which hived off from us as bees do! But, all told, I think we do not number a hundred.

In a sense, our meeting is conducted like a Quaker meeting but it differs in important respects. For one thing, we know what we are all

meditating upon, and our meditations are always based directly on the teaching of Christ. Some passage from the Gospel is read by the server. We then discuss it for about twenty minutes and then observe twenty minutes of silence: or in some groups the silence comes immediately after the reading and the discussion later.

The point I want to make, and the discipline of our group which is especially hard, is this: *no one must speak immediately after anyone else*. Whatever is said must be considered at least for a few seconds before any comment, contradiction or agreement is expressed. We often find that the speaker has in the silence been following an entirely different trend of thought from ourselves. It is then our duty to drop our own train of thought until we have considered the one now suggested, believing that it is directed by the Holy Spirit. If, as of course does sometimes happen, we find that train of thought truly foolish and unfruitful we may then drop it and return to our own. But this must not be done without very humble consideration of the possibilities that the speaker is not foolish but we are stupid.

As I have said, after all these years I still continually fail to follow this method, but I can truly say that I have learned very much from it and that a new respect for and willingness to listen to opinions which at first sight often seem to me quite foolish has grown a little in my restless and impatient mind. And it is when all of us are humbly and consistently treating others' remarks with this kind of respect that we get the most fruitful and enlightening results.

MAUDE ROYDEN SHAW.

We are always glad to hear from readers upon any topic of general or special concern to *The Frontier*. All letters are acknowledged, as many as possible answered, and we shall continue to print, as space permits, those we find most suitable for publication.—Eds.

AN ARCHBISHOP'S FEARS

THE relation of the Church of England to the State is not merely a domestic concern of Anglicans. It concerns all citizens, and especially all Christian citizens. Moreover, in many foreign countries the relations between Church and State have become a focal point in the political and ideological conflicts of our time. The question may reasonably be asked whether, before we know where we are, they may not become here a touchstone of men's final allegiance and a cause in which the struggle for human freedom will come to a head. If a Church and State struggle should develop in England of a kind similar to those that have flared up elsewhere, it would certainly not affect the Church of England alone. The Free Churches would also be involved.

The interest of the Archbishop of York's book on *Church and State in England* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1958.) lies in the fact that he intends to take the possibility of such a conflict seriously. Unfortunately he restricts his attention to the prospects and fortunes of the Church of England, and appears to have no thought to spare for the way in which other Christian communions in England would be affected by the struggle which he regards as more than possible. A reviewer, who would take the title "Church and State in England" to cover other churches beside the Church of England, can only call attention to this limitation and regret it.

A substantial part of the book is occupied with an historical survey which throws light on some dark and curious features of the present landscape, but it is apparent from the first page that the Archbishop's purpose is to present an argument for a "readjustment" in the existing relationship between the Church of England and the State. It can be granted at once that the existing relationship, which is the product of a long and intricate course of historical evolution is full of theoretical anomalies and that no one in his senses

can expect it to continue indefinitely. A new ecclesiastical settlement in England, of some kind or other, will sooner or later be inescapable. The questions the Archbishop raises are whether certain readjustments are urgently necessary now, whether the Church of England ought to press for them and, if it fails to get them, ask to be disestablished, and whether the State and its citizens can be expected to acquiesce in, if not to welcome, them. The reforms which the Archbishop advocates concern the appointment of the chief officers of the Church, its right to revise its forms of worship, a new code of canons, and Church courts. He considers that by conceding to the Church more liberty in regard to these matters, the State would help it "in its work of evangelization; in its witness to the nation in the cause of truth and righteousness; in the defence of man's freedom; in the removal of an obstacle in the way of Christian reunion; and in making the Church of to-day more after the likeness of the primitive and apostolic Church" (p. 307).

It is impossible here to examine the Archbishop's proposals or arguments in detail, but it must be said that in the aggregate they are by no means convincing and it is to be hoped that the Church of England will not hasten to follow his lead. It is in fact unlikely to do so; it is surprising that the Archbishop has persuaded himself that most members of the Church share his "really desperate anxiety" about the present position (p. 220).

Dr. Garbett says that the iron entered into his soul (p. 214) when the Revised Prayer Book was rejected by Parliament, but he is candid enough to acknowledge in retrospect that the attempt to revise its worship was badly approached and mishandled from the side of the Church and that the House of Commons may have done the Church a good service by holding matters up. If there had been agreement in the Church of England then, or if there were now, about a revision of its forms of worship, there is no reason to suppose that its relationship to the State would prove an obstacle. The obstacles lie in the Church's own

condition. It is significant that the Church in Wales, which has been disestablished since 1920, has not yet produced a revised Prayer Book. The Church of England, instead of tilting against imaginary obstacles to its freedom, might be better occupied in simplifying and improving the extremely complicated and cumbrous organs of self-government which it already possesses, and in providing for a better representation of its lay members. The Archbishop notes that this "difficulty must be overcome", but makes no suggestions about how it should be.

He has indeed to admit that the existing relationship of the Church of England and the State works quite tolerably, despite its theoretical anomalies; his argument gains its plausibility from the apprehension that, if the State becomes "totalitarian", the existing machinery would enable it to control and exploit the Church. An Archbishop, instead of anticipating the advent of totalitarianism in England, might be expected to voice and confirm what is certainly the resolution of the vast majority of the British people, that at all costs a free and non-totalitarian society shall be maintained here. As it is, Dr. Garbett says (referring in each case to England) not only that "it looks sometimes as if the State might become totalitarian in spirit and in claims" (p. 141), but that "the State is steadily moving in the direction of totalitarianism" (p. 139) and that "to-day the new Totalitarian State . . . regulates and plans the lives of all its subjects" (p. 101).

His chief fear seems to be that the State will pack the bench of bishops with its own ideological nominees. But, if that should be attempted, the Church would find that it had plenty of safeguards, and it would bear a stronger "witness to the nation" and "in defence of man's freedom" by resisting a real attack than by devising protections against a hypothetical one. The Archbishop allows that the present method by which bishops are appointed works well and that all who are concerned in the procedure perform their functions with a high sense of responsibility and integrity. He

lays special stress on the part played by the Prime Minister, and even says (p. 5) that "by law" bishops are nominated by him. We have never heard of such a law. Bishops are nominated by the Crown on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. To dwell upon the fact that the Prime Minister now-a-days may be a member of any church or of none is misleading. The Sovereign anyhow, as the Act of Settlement lays down, shall join in communion with the Church of England, and the Crown is not, in this connexion at all events, merely a rubber stamp. The Prime Minister does not act as a private individual on the basis of his personal religious beliefs, but as the responsible adviser of the Sovereign, and the Church might be grateful that a servant of the Crown so well-informed and so well qualified is still ready to perform this function. It will be a sad day for the Church of England when it has to depend on processes of ecclesiastical election.

On these and other grounds the Archbishop's anxiety for immediate readjustments in the relation of Church and State seems to us inopportune. The one thing that might make them opportune would be if they were part and parcel of a scheme of union between the Church of England and the Free Churches, and if they were advanced as agreed steps towards a new ecclesiastical settlement in England. But apart from a single paragraph towards the end of his book, the Archbishop displays no interest in the Free Churches, and the reader will wonder whether the Church of England is at all in earnest in the joint conversations about reunion which are at present taking place, and which have been said to be promising.

A. R. V.

REVIEW

Being and Having. GABRIEL MARCEL. Translated by KATHARINE FARRER. (Dacre Press. 10/6 net.)

This admirable and eminently readable translation of *Etre et Avoir* (Aubier, 1935) contains a Metaphysical Diary which M. Marcel kept from 1928-1933, in which we are allowed as it were to eavesdrop on the private meditations of a thinker who, as Prof. MacKinnon remarks in his useful preface, "is concerned to speak with himself rather than to an audience," and this is followed by four more coherent studies on themes already familiar from the embryonic jottings of the Diary. It has been questioned whether the title is an adequate or indeed accurate indication of the contents of the book—it has been suggested that "Faith and Reality" (the sub-title of Part II) would have been more exact as well as more "selling". I think there is more to be said for "Problem and Mystery" as a remarkably inclusive summing-up of M. Marcel's theme both here and throughout his work but as it is one of his concerns to show that the world of problems is in fact identical with the world of Having and the world of mystery with that of Being we are merely pleading for nouns as opposed to present participles (infinitives in French).

The fact that this philosopher presents us with his "nuclear" thoughts in diary form is significant. He has told us in another place that it always embarrasses him to be asked to state "my philosophy", since in his view the philosopher is the very opposite of a "proprietor". "One shows what one *has*, one reveals what one *is*." The trouble with most ancient and modern philosophy is that it has never risen far above the realm of having, of "showing what one has", like a commercial traveller presenting his wares, or a scientist his findings. The philosophical consciousness is not a light shining in dark places but is itself the "shadow", for where I am most involved in metaphysical reality, that reality is most impenetrable. "The shadow is at the centre." The realm of the "penetrable" is the realm of science and technics. The technician repairing a motor-bike is not involved in the reality of the motor-bike. It stands before him in its entirety, it "blocks his way", he can therefore take it to pieces (as we do to people when we treat them as objects outside ourselves rather than persons in whose reality we are involved) and he can put it together again, repair it. It is a "problem" (and it is curious that M. Marcel has not remarked on the etymology of the word itself which, like *ball* and *ballet*, symbol and

ballistics, comes from *ballein* = to throw, it is therefore something *thrown* in front of you—very appropriately from M. Marcel's point of view). I can stand aside from a problem (the more I become involved in it the more mysterious it becomes, the less I am able to "solve", "dissolve" it) but I cannot stand aside from the universe, I cannot, to quote a most significant phrase from Lord Reith's autobiography, regard life (as Lord Reith does) as an "engineering job of a kind". The whole process of secularization and profanation (analysed at a deep level in M. Marcel's moving account of Peter Wust's ideas on Piety) has been a reduction of mystery to problem. Evil itself has become a "problem". But being involved is fundamental to the overcoming of evil. "Evil simply recognized from outside ceases to be evil." God Himself has become a problem. Heidegger is always being dubbed an atheist (Mr. Montgomery Belgion has joined in the popular attack in his review of the present book in *Theology*), but is he not leading us at this point in the same direction of thought as M. Marcel, when he writes that "to proclaim God as the 'supreme value' is a degradation of the nature of God. Thinking in terms of value is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against Being." We have lost, and this may be, says Heidegger "the unique disaster of our time", "the dimension of the Holy" within which thinking about, contemplating the nature of God is first possible. How far Heidegger would agree with Marcel in calling this dimension that of "mystery", or with Max Picard, the dimension of "Silence", is only a secondary issue. What is important is that he is on the side of Marcel in his awareness of the existence and the loss of this ultimate dimension. As Dr. Oldham wisely remarked at the Present Question Conference in April of last year (it so happens that he was also speaking of Marcel's philosophy): "it may be that the important dividing line is not the difference between atheists and those who believe in God but between those who are aware and those who are not aware of this ultimate dimension of human life."

Spiritual life is a progress upwards from the level of Having, where I stand outside the object, to the higher level of Being, where the "duality of possessor and possessed is lost in a living reality". It is this "creative exchange", this "commutation" ("la marque de toute vie spirituelle" as he calls it in *Homo Viator*—incidentally the current American usage of "commutation" is another curious sidelight on the profanation of words themselves!) in which Having is transcended and eternal Being is revealed. It is the realm of Love in which Fear is cast out. (Marcel has much to say of great importance

on the intimacy between fear and having-fear of losing things one "has", fear and technics, fear and problems). Love, creative exchange, occurs between man and things as well as between man and persons and man and God. It may be love for a garden or a farm or (an exciting thought coming from Marcel)—love of a scientist for his laboratory, which suggests that he has not said his last word on Science and Being. It is rewarding to consider many of our most urgent conflicts and controversies (take Agri-culture versus Agri-industry for example) in the light of "problem or mystery", "standing outside and taking to pieces" or "being involved in and participating in life at the point where it is inexhaustible". In another essay (Ebauche d'une philosophie concrète) Marcel has wonderfully described the two modes of human relatedness to a place (which leads straight to "problems" of economics and politics all too much neglected by the politicians) and (there is unfortunately hardly any direct mention of the theme in the present volume) has dealt with the "mystery of the Family" in one of his greatest and most sustained pieces of thinking. Readers keen to pursue the eavesdropping here embarked on may be well advised to turn next to *Homo Viator* which contains that piece as well as a remarkable "phenomenology" of Hope (of which the "nuclear ideas" are to be found *passim* in this present volume). Those whose French does not stretch to reading him in the original will surely wish to join in thanks to Mrs. Farrer for what is in many ways a *tour de force* and to add their voices to a gentle but firm petition for more, perhaps above all for *Homo Viator*.

S. G.

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